

THE SCENERY

Of the Earth in the Carboniferous Ages,

As Seen by a Spirit From the Red Planet Mars,

Which Spirit, in an Unguarded Moment, Dropped Right Down in Our Midst and Told a Dreamer All About It.

A Paper of Great Interest and Rare Literary Merit Read Before a Recent Meeting of the Chautauque Circle.

On a chill November evening, not long ago, I sat before the grate in my study vaguely conscious of a feeling of snug comfort imparted by the glowing embers of the coal fire.

While so situated—reclining at ease in my comfortable arm-chair—I fell to musing upon the vast energies imprisoned in the black lumps of carbon that I had heaped upon the fire—energies that, net free and guided by the intelligence of man, are capable of supplying the power requisite to put in motion all the millions of wheels in the thousands of factories whose furnace fires burn by night and by day all over the world—energies that send the fast mail and swift express trains and long processions of freight, laden with the wealth of a nation, with the speed of the wind across the continent, and with like speed propel the floating palaces of the Atlantic upon their journeys to and fro between the shores of the Old and the New Worlds. Outside, the rain from a leaden sky came pattering down upon the freshly fallen leaves; the wind sighed drearily through the leafless branches of the trees; the twilight deepened, and my musing mood grew more profound; the consciousness of my surroundings became more vague and dreamy still. My thoughts no longer came in logical sequence, but were merged in a confusion of fanciful mental images born of an exuberant imagination released from the control of the reasoning faculties and the will.

Up to this time I had been alone in the room, but gradually I became aware of a presence by my side—a strange presence, that awoke me at first, but on venturing to look up I beheld by the dim light of the fading embers—not an armed burglar nor a fierce robber, but the shadowy outlines of the tall form of a man apparently about forty-five years of age. His mien was dignified and commanding, and I observed that he wore a sort of military cloak, of very peculiar fashion, the folds of which completely enveloped his graceful figure. His head was bare, and his brown, wavy hair fell almost to his shoulders; his eyes were large, dark and piercing; his face smooth shaven and his features singularly handsome.

Altogether, the bearing and appearance of my strange visitor was such as to impress me with the idea that he was a man of fine intelligence and a refined and agreeable gentleman. There was, however, an indescribable something in his appearance and manner (notwithstanding his almost youthful features) that was suggestive of a long-gone age—of a remote antiquity—of the mysteries of dead centuries.

While I was engaged in making these observations, my visitor moved forward and took up a position on the hearth in front of the fire, where he stood with arms folded across his breast and his gaze turned full upon me—not curiously—not inquisitively, but with an expression upon his face which indicated that he only waited my address before proceeding to give an account of himself and the reasons for his singular visit.

When I had recovered in a slight degree from the amazement at the cool assurance with which my visitor had intruded his presence unannounced upon my privacy, I proceeded to address him with an inquiry as to his name, and the circumstance to which I was indebted for the honor of his visit.

His response served only to deepen my amazement, and in the beginning wrought in my mind the conviction that the strange intruder was a madman who had eluded the vigilance of his keepers and escaped from some asylum for the insane. But, as he progressed in the narration of the strange story which I am about to relate, his manner was so graceful and his discourse so rational, concise and convincing that all doubts of his sanity soon vanished.

Spell-bound, and strangely fascinated as well by the charm of his eloquence, as the deep, absorbing interest of his narrative, I listened to his recital of the following story:

"It is not important," he began, "that I should announce to you my name, for it is one of which you never heard before; but since you have seen fit to request it, know, then, that my name was Ezerphael. My dwelling place is now—no matter where."

"Thirty millions of years ago my home was on the red planet Mars, the brilliant star that blazes in your midnight sky when your earth passes between it and the sun, with a luster only surpassed by that of the dazzling Venus, or the mighty Jupiter."

"During the latter years of my existence on that planet, I dwell in the city

of Deimos, on the shore of DeLarne Ocean, the city being the great metropolis of that large continent lying under the Martian Equator, upon which your terrestrial astronomers have bestowed the name of Maedler Land.

"The recent great progress made in science on your planet has acquainted you with the fact that Mars is an older world than Terra. In fact, as long ago as thirty millions of years Science, Literature and the Arts had achieved a greater progress—physical, intellectual and spiritual—on the 'Ruddy Planet' than has yet been dreamed of on the earth. There the allotted span of a mortal life is nine hundred years (and you will remember that the year of Mars is nearly twice the length of the earth's year.)

"Physically powerful and mentally brilliant, all the senses of the Martians—when I dwell on that planet—were a thousand fold more acute than those of the earth's inhabitants. Especially was this true of the sense of vision, their visual organs being so peculiarly constructed that a perfect image of even the most distant orb of the Solar System was formed at a focal distance of twenty-two inches from the eye, where the smallest objects on the surfaces of those orbs were as distinctly visible in their true form and outline as if placed under one of your microscopes.

"As you are well aware, the Earth and Mars at certain periods are so situated in their respective orbits that the distance separating them is less than thirty-five millions of miles, as in the year 1877 when your American astronomer, Prof. Hall, by the aid of the great telescope in your National Observatory at Washington, discovered the two tiny moons of Mars, which were imagined and very accurately described by Swift's hero, Gulliver, more than a century before they had been dreamed of, as realities, by your savants.

"On such occasions, objects on the earth's surface could be seen with wonderful clearness and distinctness from the red planet, as the great globe of the earth flying along its orbit revolved upon its axis, bringing in turn every part of its surface under our gaze.

"It was under such favorable circumstances as I have described that I—thirty millions of years ago, while yet a dweller in my distant home out yonder in space where the red light of Mars glows against the dark background of the sky—was induced to make a study of the processes then going on upon the earth whereby those immense stores of carbon (which you call coal) were being accumulated by thrifty Nature.

"As you may well imagine, the earth was not then as now—a world finished and perfected, but undergoing the long and slow processes of development that were requisite to bring about the conditions that now prevail. Although ages, countless ages, had rolled away since out of primeval chaos, the formless fire mist had condensed into a red-hot globe of molten matter, and since the red-hot globe had so far cooled beneath the down-pouring torrents of the 'primeval storm' as to permit the formation of a solid crust.

"Eonic time had passed away—the Huron and Cambrian, the Silurian and Devonian strata all lay heavy on the Laurentian rocks which had been the home of Earth's earliest life as they are the tombs of Earth's earliest dead.

"The continents and islands of the world, as they are now exhibited on your maps, were then unformed, and were it possible to re-produce a map of the earth's surface as it was then, not one familiar feature would greet your eye.

"In the carboniferous age the shores of the Atlantic Ocean extended from Connecticut through Southern New York and Northern Ohio, Indiana and Illinois to what is now the great Valley of the Mississippi.

"Then there was no great Appalachian chain, for the Alleghenies had not as yet been born of the sea.

"On the west the waves of the Pacific Ocean surged and rolled over all the western half of North America as far east as the western boundary of Kansas, and its restless billows dashed and foamed over the places where now are the slopes and snow-crowned summits of the Rocky Mountains. While from the south the Gulf of Mexico jutted northwards as far as Middle Iowa and rolled its widening waters in a northwesterly direction far toward the sources of the Missouri River, where it met the cold embrace of the icy waters of what is now the Frozen Ocean of the North.

"Then the beautiful Ohio, the turbid Missouri, the majestic Mississippi and the rushing Niagara were as yet in the far future of Nature's slowly-unfolding plans. The interior of the continent, as we then looked down upon it, was a vast, low-lying plain, but recently emerged from the ocean. It included all of that region now known as Western Pennsylvania, Western Virginia, the States of Ohio, Indiana and Illinois, all except their extreme northern portions, and the whole of the States of Kentucky and Tennessee.

"All this great region was a level, marshy plain, spotted all over with fresh water, lakes and lagoons.

"The 'Cincinnati Ridge,' or the great 'Silurian Island'—a long, narrow ridge of land beginning at a point near Nashville, Tenn., and extending northeastward including the site of the city of Cincinnati, to a point about seventy miles northwest of the latter city—was then the only land west of New York that projected above the marshes of the great plain.

The boundaries of that 'island,' as it existed then, and the evidences of its existence and character through all the long, eventful period of the carboniferous age, are shown and furnished you now by the formations and fossils of the Lower Silurian exposed at the surface.

"All over this wide, marshy plain—on the borders of its lakes and lagoons, and even in the waters of the shallower lakes—grew vast unbroken forests (often times hundreds of miles in extent) of gigantic lepidodendrons, with singularly scarred bodies and sigillaria, with fluted trunks, while upon every intervening foot of soil a rank growth of flowerless vegetation, consisting of huge ferns, club mosses, rushes and conifers, grew and flourished in wild luxuriance.

"During the whole of this period, a moist, warm, stifling atmosphere, heavy and thick with the deadly poison of carbonic acid, enveloped the earth. This poisonous acid nourished and fed the rank forest and shrub growths of that age, and was thus eliminated from the atmosphere and stored up in the bosom of earth for the comfort and well-being of Adam's race.

"Through the rents in the thick clouds and vapors that much of the time veiled the sombre sky of that period, the solar orb, then younger and far more vigorous than now, poured its floods of light and intense heat to supplement the heat from the earth's interior, and still further stimulate the rapid growth of the rank vegetation of the swampy plains, while at night the condensing mists and methic vapors hung like a pall over the silent world, and the earth's satellite—that you call the moon—could be seen from our planet sailing through the sky, a veritable spitter with all the innumerable host of craters, that you now look upon through your telescopes, in active eruption and hurling their thousands of bombs in every direction in space.

"The frequent tempests gathered in the thickening air, and the howling of fierce hurricanes and resistless tornadoes, the bellowing of volcanoes that sprang blazing from ocean's depths, and the awful roar of the earthquake made the music of Nature in that early day.

"At times in the throes of earthquakes thousands of square miles of forest were swallowed up and sunk to the depth of ten thousand feet and more. The hurricanes and cyclones that swept with wild fury over land and sea leveled many millions of acres more of these forest giants, and new forests grew rapidly above their prostrate forms to be in a like manner leveled in their turn.

"Through long, long ages, these processes of growth and accumulation were continued, while the subsidence and emergence of the land, occurring in many places, buried vast heaps and layers of this fallen timber and vegetable debris under other layers of sand, clay and rocky detritus.

"Even to this day in the rocky shales and sedimentary deposits, overlying and intervening between the coal seams in your mines, are preserved pictures of the graceful forms of the ferns and giant club mosses of that era lithographed and fixed upon tablets of stone by Nature's processes, with such matchless skill that every detail, even to the slender nerves with their characteristic bifurcations, and all the 'Veinings' delicate and fibers tender of their leafage, is revealed to the eye of the geologist. While upright in the sand and soil of the youthful continent, into which they sank so many ages ago, are the huge trunks of the sigillaria and the lepidodendron occasionally preserved. Embalmed—with a skill infinitely superior to that which, through the long lapse of forty centuries, down to the present time, preserved the dead of ancient Egypt.

"But, during all the long years of the carboniferous age, no flowers bloomed in beauty, and no fruitful blossoms shed their fragrance abroad on the murky air, for the rank vegetation of that epoch bore neither flower nor fruit. And, although it covered all the plain with its mantle of verdure, the world was a vast solitude.

"Then the sea was young and mighty in its strength, but its waves rolled heavily in and broke upon solitary shores; and when the tempest, the earthquake and the volcano were still, no sound save their silent murmurs interrupted the dread universal stillness. For the voice of man, the cry of brute and the song of bird had not yet broken the young earth's rest, and no living, breathing thing trod the plains or penetrated the dark fastnesses of the forests and jungles of the island continents whose shores were washed by the salt waters of the all-embracing sea.

"Then, 'monster fishes swam the silent main,' and the inhabitants of the deep were earth's only living creatures. The terrible sharks that abounded in the turbid waters pursued their lesser prey, the descendants of the mail clad fishes of the Devonian Age, up to the very shores of the swampy plain, and often in their eager and cruel pursuit ventured into the shallow waters of the numerous estuaries where myriads of them perished ignominiously, being unable to retreat; and their remains, uncovered by the miner's pick, enable the ichthyologists of the nineteenth century to divine their history and indicate their true rank and place among the orders of being that have passed away, as well as their relation to analogous, but greatly modified forms of existence at the present day.

"Some few amphibians there were at that time, but the dark and gloomy forests had for them few attractions, and they made their home mainly in the depths of the sea, leaving but few traces of their existence on the land, where no air-breathing creature now known to you could have inhaled the noxious gases of the atmosphere for a single hour and lived. But 'this, all this, was in the olden time long ago.'

"And there was in it all the promise of the fulfillment of a vast design by an Omnipotent Creator.

"Thirty thousand centuries have glided by since the curtain was rung down upon the closing scenes of the carboniferous age to rise again upon the era of Mesozoic time. And cons upon cons have rolled away since the Mesozoic was merged in Cenozoic time, in the latter stages of which the earth 'received her king' in the image of his Maker.

"During all of that vast period the forests and ferns, the club mosses and rushes of the carboniferous age have been lying hidden away in earth's bosom, undergoing the chemical changes and transformations which converted them into carbon, that now supplies your home with light and warmth and comfort, and drives the vast machinery of commerce and trade throughout the world."

Here my visitor paused. "Go on, go on," I said eagerly. "Tell me more concerning the 'wonders of the prehistoric world'—of that shadowy past whose mysteries have hitherto remained hopelessly sealed to all my race."

"No," he replied, "I have done with the past, and the present claims your attention. Time passes, and I came here upon no mere vain or idle errand.

"In my wanderings in space, a disembodied spirit, I often pass by your world. Recently I learned of the discovery of some of the immense stores of oil and natural gas that underlie many portions of your State. It was, however, with great surprise that I learned that these discoveries had been effected—not only without the aid of your most expert, practical geologists, but against their advice and their positive declarations that oil and gas, in large quantities, had no existence, and could not have existence in the limestones of the lower silurian strata.

"The practical demonstration of the fallacy of their theory is now complete, and they now know what I became aware of millions of years ago, viz: that the formations of the lower silurian contain the whole of the supplies of these products of the coal period that underlie your State. For, while I was yet in the flesh on the Red Planet, I witnessed the formation of many of these vast reservoirs in the silurian rocks while they were being alternately upheaved and sunk by earthquake throes that racked the earth's whole frame.

"These immense reservoirs, filled as they are with the gases and oils generated in Nature's retorts from decaying animal and vegetable matter, are sources of boundless wealth, and they exist in many places; but it is easy to miss and difficult to find them.

"Quite recently I learned that some of Hillsboro's enterprising citizens were about to tap the earth here in the hope that they may be able to discover the coveted treasures that were hidden away in Nature's store-houses so long ago.

"The town of Hillsboro is built almost upon the extreme northern limit of the great silurian island, called by geologists the 'Cincinnati Ridge,' to which I have before alluded. In its immediate vicinity are inexhaustible supplies of natural gas and oil of the best quality; but they are peculiarly located, and can be found only by the aid of one who, like myself, beheld their foundations laid in the beginning."

"Listen, then, for I am about to give you most valuable information.

"About three miles from this spot, on the farm of—

Here my strange visitor ceased abruptly. There was a rushing sound like the noise of invisible winds in flight. The room was suddenly filled with a flood of light.

The servant had lighted the gas, and I awoke to hear her statement "that supper had been on the table a quarter of an hour, and would all be spoiled if I didn't come at once."

H. A. P.
November 11, 1886.

There is more catarrh in this section of the country than all other diseases put together, and until the last few years was supposed to be incurable. For a great many years doctors pronounced it a local disease, and prescribed local remedies, and by constantly failing to cure with local treatment pronounced it incurable. Science has proven catarrh to be a constitutional disease, and therefore requires a constitutional treatment. Hall's Catarrh Cure, manufactured by F. J. Cheney & Co., Toledo, Ohio, is the only constitutional cure now on the market. It is taken internally in doses from 10 drops to a teaspoonful. It acts directly upon the blood and mucus surfaces of the system. They offer one hundred dollars for any case it fails to cure. Send for circular and testimonials. Address, F. J. CHENEY & Co., Toledo, O.

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When you are thinking of buying holiday presents do not forget that a copy of Hugh McNeill's Poems would be a very desirable gift. For sale at this office; price 35 cents.

Ask your grocer for Forester's city butter crackers. They are the best.

"BY THE FIRE-LIGHT."

Some Reflections Upon the Returning Holidays,

By a Writer of Whom Hillsboro and the Highland Hills Are Justly Proud.

Shall it be prose or poetry? A question not easy of solution, since the date which by the common consent of mankind is celebrated as the birthday of our Saviour in human form, has been the subject of eulogy in both prose and verse by immortal pens. Through the long centuries it has been an old, yet ever new theme, appealing to the consideration of every finite being, and calling to mind the historic event upon which the eternal destiny of our race hinges for weal or woe. Old as it is, each heart will find its own mode of expression, and find its own charm and magic in the anniversary of the day when our Lord assumed an earthly shape, and each soul may rest secure in the belief that on the night preceding this anniversary all evil things retire to their abodes of gloom and darkness and are powerless to work harm to the true and good.

The lithe and active forms of children take renewed life, and their flashing eyes shed gladness around, as they retire on this night before Christmas, to awake in eager expectation at the sound of the morning bells ringing their peans of joy. The devout elders, whether in cottage or lordly mansion, feel a reverence becoming the momentous occasion. There are some grateful hearts whose anthems of praise never cease, and "that peace which passeth understanding" fills their earnest souls. On the village streets fond parents, with hurrying footsteps, and laden with presents for dear children, bend their homeward way. For one evening their thoughts are pure and strangely human. They feel a kinship with their fellow-beings. The mark of little foot-prints is seen across the snowy sea, where these little children have been at play. Hasten in, oh, parents, and let to-morrow bring anew to these fresh, young spirits, the old-old story, and sunshine fall in joy and glees on the little people and make this day the happiest in all their lives in memory of Him who said, "Suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of Heaven."

Yes, it is Christmas Eve! Oh, friend, has the hue from the fleeting rain-bow which arches over the fountain of youth vanished before your maturer sight? Do the vesper chimes no longer make music to your palmed senses, and have you no longing to hear the Matin bells on Christmas morn? Have all recollections of the olden times retreated into vague obscurity, and do you not

"Sing for the touch of a vanished hand, And the sound of a voice that is still?" Look in the soft, suffusing glow of the firelight; around the room, where books on books stare upon you with meaning gaze in stolid ranks, and in spite of your will, your dim musings have a tinge of sadness, yet, you cannot tell. You feel the long drawn and ill-spent years departing, and know that soon—very soon—your voice will be silent in chamber and hall, and your place vacant among the haunts of men. You look across the swelling river; you hear the waves beating in the dark waters as they near its shores, and you see also, as in a vision, a golden light streaming amid its sullen shadows, the blush of another morn in veil of glittering sheen, and you rejoice in the hope of the Resurrection where once again the weary heart shall greet, in everlasting joy, the crystal fountains of perennial youth. And so, musing this Christmas Eve (how strange it is), you think of summer and June flowers—of humming bees and birds of glittering plumage—of green woods and placid lakes, where lilies float in snowy beauty—of wild roses on grassy hills—of brooks and rills—of the weird legends of childhood and shadows flitting in hollows and dells, and seem to hear, as in the days gone by, the wild and joyous laughter of the companions of your youth. Listen!—there is the faint sound of music such as once ensnared your soul to love, when life held no base alloy of care or sorrow—when the earth was Heaven and Heaven was earth, and in childhood's waywardness no retrospections harassed the brain, and all was free as the singing birds, chanting their orisons amid the orchard's bloom. Once more along the old porch of childhood's home, the rays of shining light glimmer in many a curious maze; the scent of the climbing woodbine in its trellis, near the steps, is wafted on the evening air, and once again you are at play in all the wanton exuberance of youth. You see a face—alas, of one you were too young to know 'ere immortality claimed her for its own. It appears undimmed by guile, and imagination pictures it with a radiance around the brow,—so tender, so full of grace that every thought of evil, every will of deceit, before that visioned glance is erased. You go to the casement, where, through rifted clouds, the distant stars and wandering planets gleam in yellow beauty, and you seem to see the glistering robes of the fairies of the blue ether in the darkness of night, while floods of celestial music from unseen choirs pour in rushing strains through the liquid expanse of sky, and memories of those who have gone before mingle

in cadence and fill the apartment where the fire-light slowly fades away. On an easel is the pictured face of The Madonna—Mary, the mother of our Lord. Your mother's name was Mary, most charming of names and endeared by every association in all languages and among all people. Your mother has slept beneath the lettered marble for long, long years. You could not know her—it is so long since, and you so young, but you have created her image. You have a picture on the brain—a conception in the heart, of how she looked on earth and how she looks now. The face of your dreams is that of The Madonna. Look at the portrait on the easel of her who has been glorified by the painter's art, into the loveliest of women. Is it any wonder that the followers of a great church, the earliest to spring into being, has bowed in worship to a sweet countenance, looking benignantly from canvass, in gallery and cathedral, and whose sculptured form is the model for all that is perfect and pure?—The mellow fire has burned lower—a shadowy presence seems to pervade the room—the old buried music makes refrain to the dreaming senses—a phantom hand caresses the brow and the soul renews its youth again while the mottled fire-light waves to and fro and the lonely wild grieves by the casement panes. It is so real, this memory, that the fantasies coined by dreamy poet's brain, seem vain and idle and the fevered cares of the world but dim and shadowy myths. The night is blessed and the silent orb of sky shine on in tranquil peace. The soul has a childlike balm of rest when, amid snows and chilling winter winds, it can muse on blue-birds in the opening spring, the robins on their vine-thatched nests and feel grateful to a Higher Power for all it has been and all it hopes to be. To such a one the jewelled gleam of the throne above is plain, and the departed, with star-lit eyes, shed blessings on the vigils of the night, and over all, the calm, sweet face of The Madonna hushes the spirit's vain surmise, and vanishes all mere speculative doubt.

Study her beauty in pictured guise, glowing with love and light from the Fountain Head. Who, studying the picture of The Virgin Mother, with its speaking eyes, can allow thoughts of this poor, human world with its shams and tinsel shows and vain pomps, to intrude? Let your heart have succor of sorrow and care, and listen to the crystalline chime "the runic rhyme" of your songs of childhood.

Then hail! all hail Madonna "thou fairest among women" so human yet divine! "Gems of purest ray serene" are likened unto thee and the cloud reaching mountains are a type of thy majesty. In the green valleys of the sunny lands of earth millions of devout people worship at thy shrines, and Christians everywhere glorify thy name as the exemplar of perfect womanhood, and as the medium of God's latest and crowning covenant with man. All that genius inspired by faith, could achieve in Art has culminated in thee, Madonna of our affections. Who has not seen your image in its multifarious guise from The Annunciation to the Mater Dolorosa—so familiar—so divine?—who has not heard of The Madonna della Seggiana in the Pitti Palace, Florence? Hawthorne says of this: "To copy this Madonna, application must be made five years before-hand, so many are the artists who aspire to copy it." But your copy is not this one, nor is it by Raphael or Titian—she does not stand among cherubim, nor on the cloud, or on column of victory or gilded altar. You have a simple head enveloped in a hood from which the calm face looks—an etching—yet to you it is all that is beautiful, elegant and pure. A symbol of divine woman. Who first drew it? Perhaps it is a copy of the head from the noted painting of Hans Holbein, the younger, in the Dresden Gallery. No connoisseur has passed on it in judgment. An art critic might not like it. Tastes differ and art criticism is often at fault. But to you it is a gem. You find in it love, grace, dignity, intellect and hope. You have studied the face until it lingers in the memory and haunts you with the thought of something seen in childhood and you have a longing unutterable for immortality! What shall it be, prose or poetry?—

TO A PORTRAIT OF THE MADONNA.

Madonna fairest—Heaven's child! The look from these seraphic eyes, Impress each soul, if unbeguiled, With wonder and a sweet surmise Of glory by faith's light to see. And dwell in sun-clad lands with thee!

How lovely is this pictured face, How free from ill or boding harm, How wondrous in its lines of grace, Where soul of music seems to charm? Ah! would that thou could'st only speak, And tell me what I vainly seek.

It's pity in thy steady glance, Which seems to make a dumb appeal, To one in fond and gazing trance, Who thinks those eyes may yet reveal, The dreams which like a distant star, Mock us with halos from afar?

Be ever fair—thou only one, Madonna of the sky and earth, Teach me the life of life to shun, And where the good has birth—

Where'er I go—what lands I see— A hope and memory to me.

VI.
As orisons in morning light Which quiver in the lambent air,— Or lark's shrill notes of clear delight O'er meadows green and fair, Bind 'round my soul thy magic power, Madonna in each flitting hour.

VII.
Why doth thy face call up a thought, Of long ago—forgotten long, Of childish days—unheard, unthought The tracery of a mother's song? 'Tis that thy looks, Madonna mild, Remind me of one, when but a child.

VIII.
I tender then in her dear name My homage, queen of land and sea: 'Tis fancy—yet is one to blame, Who links his mother's name with thee? Who comes in dreams, with star-lit eyes, While a silent gulf between them lies.

IX.
I see a picture of long ago I feel again, a mother's hand Caress my brow—and soft and low, She speaks to me in fairy land Her tender tones, my duties teach, Her eyes gleam love at liping speech.

X.
Yet never more on this fair earth Can I a mother's form recall, Nor trait, or tone, nor look of mirth, Or word of joy from funeral pall— For I was young, when she in peace, Passed from the earth 'till time shall cease.

XI.
I could not know her love and grace, Yet, oh Madonna, she seems to me, Where'er she is, in realms of space, The one who most remembers thee! And purer than snow on cloud-capped hill Her robes are purer, whiter still.

XII.
Do I but dream of those pale lips, A fantasy to make me grieve And hide in shadow of eclipse, The golden hopes of Christmas Eve? Madonna no!—a smile—a tear Although thou canst not; 'twill not hurt!

It must not be forgotten that while Protestants banished pictures and statuary from the churches, because of their degradation into mere idol worship, they relegated these art treasures to galleries, public and private, where, as studies, they serve to humanize and civilize mankind. Hence it is no violation of taste to address in poetic form of expression these or any other inanimate things of beauty, either in art or nature. Milton's invocation to light, Coleridge's hymn to Mount Blanc and Horace Smith's addresses to the Mummy and the Brazen Head are readily recalled, but it would take a large catalogue to enumerate the tributes in verse to God's, rivers, mountains, woods, streams and other lifeless objects. Byron was not accredited by the public with being devout, and his clear brain was above all superstition, yet he has in Manfred and Childe Harold glorified both nature and art in language unexcelled, and in the island scene between Halide and Juan in the 3d canto of Don Juan, he has paid a tribute to the Madonna of art, which voices the sentiment of all cultured minds, and might be chanted in any Protestant Church without violation of belief.

"For though 'tis but a pictured image strike, That painting is no idol—'tis too like."

The myth of Pygmalion and his statue of the goddess Diana is familiar to classical scholars. It has been degraded in the modern drama and Diana has been turned into Galatea, who was a water nymph, and with whom the story of Pygmalion has no connection. There is a poem addressed to Galatea in the holiday number of the Graphic News, in which, whatever may be the merit of the verse, the writer shows his ignorance of mythology, by adopting the wretched dramatic version, and treating Galatea as the statue of Pygmalion endowed with life, and beloved by the artist, when her only lover was Polyphemus, the one-eyed Cyclops encountered by Ulysses.

C. H. COLLINS.
Hillsboro, O., December 1, 1886.

The First Keen Twinge.

As the season advances, the pains and aches by which rheumatism makes itself known, are experienced after every exposure. It is not claimed that Hood's Sarsaparilla is a specific for rheumatism—we doubt if there is, or can be, such a remedy. But the thousands benefited by Hood's Sarsaparilla warrant us in urging others who suffer from rheumatism to take it before the first keen twinge.

Healthy Hillsboro.

This city is celebrated as a healthy place, but the general health has never been better than at present. There have been but six deaths in the city since September 23, or for the past three months. Of these, two were quite old, two were middle aged and two were children. The paupers are living well, too, as there has not been a single coffin ordered by the township in the same time. There has not been a case of scarlet fever or diphtheria reported to the Board of Health for three weeks, and all the cases reported were quite light. It is probable that the "quarantine will be lifted" and the library opened for circulation beginning with the new year. This is a health record to be proud of.

Unclaimed Letters.

List of unclaimed letters remaining in the Post Office at Hillsboro, O., Dec. 23, 1886:

Alexander May	Leaverton John
Carey Warren	Miller A. J. (3)
Ford John	Remondier W.
Gardner Mr. M.	Strain W. A.
Harrington Curtis	Stark Mrs.
Hamer Mrs. Newton	Stinson Ed. J. P.
Heather Mrs. J.	Taylor Tracy
Jenkins Annie	Taylor Jos. A.
Johnson Jas. M.	Vannant Clara
Kopp James	Waltz Mrs. Rudie
Larkin James	Worley E. P.
	Williams Charlie

Please say advertised letters in calling for the above.

C. T. POSE, P. M.